stan covering bank drafts, mail transfers and telegraphic transfers as well as documentary letters of credit and collection of payments.

NAM Resolution over Bosnia Herzegovina

2800. SHRI SYED SIBTY RAZI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Non-Aligned Movement Foreign Ministers Conference, held at Jakarta, have approved a resolution calling for Special UN Session on Bosnia-Herzegovina;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof with background for such a resolution;

(c) whether Members of NAM have made any efforts to achieve their objectives;

(d) whether Government propose to take some initiatives in this regard; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof and if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) The Consultative Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Select Nonaligned countries was convened in Jakarta from February 9-11, 1994. The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was one of the issues discussed during the meeting. No resolution was adopted by the Ministers on the subject, However, it was agreed that that the NAM Coordinating Bureau in New York should convene a meeting of member States to explore avenues for further action through the United Nations Channels.

(d) and (e) India is a member of the NAM Task Force established to develop a coordinated NAM position on this issue. We are working closely with fellow NAM member States to evolve a consensus on the future course of action for the Nonaligned Movement with regard to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bilateral Dialogue between India and U.S.A.

2801. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some bilateral dialogue at the Senior Officers level of India and U.S. held at New Delhi during February, 1994;

(b) if so, what are the details of issued discussed;

(c) whether these dialogues would make a basis for strengthening the relations of the two countries in the political, economic and technological fields;

(d) if so, what are the details thereof and if not, what are the reasons therefor;

(e) whether these dialogues will continue to make basis for visit of Prime Minister to Washington during the current year; and

(f) if so, what are the details thereof and if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (f) The Director in the US State Department's Bureau for South Asian Affairs, visited India from February 16—20, 1994. His visit formed part of a familiarization tour to select countries in the region. Such familiarization visits are routine for officials of the US State Department.

During the course of his visit, the US official met his counterparts in the Ministries of External Affairs, Finance, Home and Commerce. Discussions covered Indo-US relations and facilitated a useful exchange of views which contributed to a better understanding of each other's perception.

No dates have been suggested or fixed for a visit by Prime Minister to Washington. Any such visit will materialise when mutually convenient for India and the US.

Streamlining the issue of passports

2802. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the major hurdles in streamlining the issue of passport all over the country;

(b) whether the passport applications will be simplified; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) The major constraints in issuing passports with a minimum of delay are shortage of staff, procedural bottlenecks and infrastructural problems. Steps are being taken to simplify the passport application form through reduction in the number of pages and consolidation of the information required.

Restriction over foreign media

2803. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the repeated false allegations by the Pakistan Government about restrictions on the visits and functioning of foreign media in the Kashmir valley;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government have taken|propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA (a) and (b) As a part of its disinformation campaign, Pakistan has been alleging that members of the international media cannot visit Jammu & Kashmir freely.

(c) Government have and will take all steps to inorm the international community that there are no restrictions on visits of foreign media to Jammu & Kashmir and to emphasise the open and transparent nature of our democratic functioning. In fact, more than 150 foreign journalists visited J & K in the last year.

Government constantly endeavour to counter the false and motivated Pakistani propaganda directed against India and to apprise world opinion of the situation in J&K.

Indian workers in Iraqi Jails

2804. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that some of the Indian workers in Kuwait were caught by Iraqi military personnel during the Gulf-war and are put in "Abu Garib" Jail in Baghdad;

(b) if so, what are the names of such Indian Prisoners of war suffering in Iraqi Jails; and

(c) what steps are being taken for their release?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) At present no Indian nationals who were arrested during the Gulf-war by Iraqi authorities are lodged in "Abu Garib" jail in Baghdad.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.